ACADEMIA | Letters

THE PROCESS OF SOCIALIZATION AND THE IDENTITY OF PORTUGUESE TEACHERS

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Introduction

The teacher, placed at the crossroads at which the school is currently, is increasingly struggling with problems that have been reaching embarrassing proportions, namely: indiscipline, the excessive number of students per class, the lack of resources, the need to provide a differentiated pedagogy to students with difficulties and follow progressively more extensive programs (Ruivo, 2008). When we talk about teachers, especially those who practice in public schools, it is observed that they belong to a professional class that feels demotivated, demoralized, and disillusioned. The reasons that characterize the teachers' demotivation result: from the misunderstanding of the purposes of the educational system and a technocratic conception of teaching work by the central administration; of content-overloaded curricula; lack of incentives for the most innovative teachers; the absence of a democratic culture in schools; problems of communication with students and relationships with families; of a social environment of skepticism and trivialization; policies of privatization and expansion of social remediation functions assigned to the Education sector (Santomé, 2008). Therefore, teachers have moved from a situation of reference professionals to the center of all the problems of education and current society, in which their pedagogical action and their function as agents of culture and change are repeatedly challenged (Barroso, 2005). In this sense, teachers face a new paradigm and sense of professionality, resulting from a multiplicity of demands, disorientation towards educational policies, discontent in the face of lack of social recognition, stagnant, asphyxiat-

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ing, and demotivating careers (Trindade, 2002).

Professional Identity of Teachers

For Nóvoa (2013), feelings, memories, experiences, commitments, anxieties, and experiences that gain meaning emerges in the teachers' voice, because the reports of the subjects' life histories highlight their individuality, time, and the social and professional context where they occur. The personal identity is inseparable from becoming and being a teacher, belonging to a family, to a circle of friends, or from the relationships that are established throughout life with the world around us. It is in this context that Dubar (1997) defines identity as the product of successive socializations, understood in its double aspect: objective or for the other (a result of interactions); and subjective or for himself (generated through biographical narratives). These two dimensions are not necessarily coherent, which allows differentiating a more practical and relational existence (materialistic tradition) and another more reflective and conscious (idealistic tradition). The importance of relational (what unites, distinguishes. or functions as opposed to others) and cultural factors (communication codes, rituals, symbols, interactions, and collective mobilizations), become essential in understanding the process of identity formation of individuals (Costa, 2003). However, Ferreira (1994) states that there is not exactly a teaching professional identity, but rather "several professional identities and diverse personal and group identity strategies" (p.63). The identification with the teaching group or the discipline that each teacher teaches has led to the fragmentation of the teaching staff, understood as a whole, of their pedagogical knowledge and corresponding scientific and social knowledge. The identity of teachers is based on processes of integration and social and professional differentiation, which occur in the school context, in spaces of associative character or continuous education (Ferreira, 1994). According to Flores (2015), professional identity is a negotiated, open and changeable process and results from the experiences of teachers in the environment and in the relationships that are established in school and outside it, that is, it is a biographical and relational process in which their expectations, beliefs, and values are present, in the construction of what it is to be and to be in the profession. Professional identity is not a product, but a continuous and dynamic space of being, acting, understanding, and being in society, therefore, it is a multifaceted phenomenon of harmony and conflict. The training and emotions of teachers are part of dimensions of conflict between staff and professionals, namely their aspirations and the confrontation with the educational reality in which professional knowledge is needed that leads to the reflexibility and criticism (personal) of how each one sees himself as a teacher and what he hopes to be in a social panorama, economic and political constantly changing. This is how Flores (2015) "recognizes the importance of biogra-

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phies and narratives in the study of professional identities, such as the broader social, cultural and professional context(s), including the training process" (p.140). Therefore, the concept of professional identity derives from multiple influences, which are incorporated internally in the sociocultural contexts to which teachers belong. Its construction implies a dynamic tension between the personal commitments of teachers and the externally imposed normative pressures. Therefore, professional identity evolves and changes over time and means knowledge, professional experience, and the integration of emotional components, considered as key elements to understand the effectiveness of their work (Davey, 2010).

The Socialization of Teachers

According to Abrantes (2011), socialization is a process of constitution of individuals and societies, through interactions, activities, and social practices, regulated by emotions, power relations, and identity-biographical projects, in a dialectic between biological organisms and sociocultural contexts. Referring to the words of Percheron (1974), through Dubar (1997), socialization is not only about the transmission of values, it is also an inseparable form of development of forms of representation of a given reality. Socialization, in Bourdieu's (1983) view, assumes the purpose of attributing a meaning to the repeatedly unequal power relations that are established in the different organizational contexts and in the forms of acceptance, reproduction, and perpetuation of a preexisting social reality. Cunha (2008) states that the process of socialization of teachers does not end in their initial, continuous, or specialized training, because it occurs throughout their life, through modeling processes, which include school and non-school social learning. These stages of life present marks that can understand phenomena of continuity, discontinuity, and rupture, when teachers question beliefs about their expectations and their professional training. Socialization is a continuous act of evolution and transformation, which incorporates the levels interconnected with teacher education, the influence resulting from interaction with students, the influence of colleagues, working conditions, parents, administrative entities, the curriculum. and the need to represent the ideological values of school and society. As Gokçe (2019) states, the process of teacher socialization implies the application of skills already acquired or the learning of new skills, in the case of teachers in initial training or recent graduates. As in other professions, teachers are in a situation of constant learning, namely: different teaching and evaluation methodologies, forms of cooperation with colleagues, parents, and other elements of the educational territory, full compliance with formal regulations established in the school organizational contexts in which they operate and the impact of policies emanating from ministerial protection on their pedagogical practice. Although they are not as valued in the field of research, as Purgach (1992)

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points out, students and the interaction that is established in the classroom have a more significant socializing impact than the norms of teacher collegiality. The question of motivation for the choice of teaching as a profession also arises in our study associated with socialization, the construction of professional identity, and by inference, the role of teachers in the implementation of Inclusive Education in our schools. For Kyriacou and Coulthard (2000), the motivations related to the choice of teacher's career during initial training are related to several reasons: family influences, the learning models observed throughout the schooling of teachers as pupils, the altruistic sense of being useful to others and society, the intrinsic aspects of the profession associated with the activity of teaching and the training acquired and finally, extrinsic factors, in particular social prestige, salary and holiday periods. The professional identity of teachers emerges as a space of struggles and conflicts, in the construction of ways of being, of being in the profession, incorporating innovations and accepting changes, which imply the factors of adhering, action, and self-awareness, to which teachers are not oblivious (Huberman, 2013). As Madureira (2012) states, socialization is a process of developing the personality of the subjects in the continuous interaction within the community where they live and want to belong. The acquisition of social and professional identity by teachers integrates constant changes, discoveries, contrasts, knowledge, and phases of conflict and acceptance.

Studies on the socialization and construction of the Professional Identity of Teachers in Portugal

The work carried out by (Flores, 2015; Madureira, 2012; Matiz, 2013; Matos, 2011), are important contributions in the field of understanding the socialization processes of Portuguese teachers and the construction of their professional identities, through qualitative studies. The four studies presented use biographical narratives, as a way of perceiving how the professional identity of teachers is constructed, as students (Flores); generations (Matiz), and Special Education (Madureira and Matos). From the reading and analysis of the conclusions identified by the authors, several common aspects stand out in implicit discourses in the trajectories of personal and professional life of the participants: the importance of scientific and pedagogical skills for the exercise of the profession; understanding the processes of teacher socialization in the definition of their identity; the ethical sense of responsibility towards students and the values of Education; the levels of resilience they have to face the tensions, dilemmas and internal conflicts caused by disillusionment with the expectations defrauded by the teaching career, the lack of time for the family and the intensification of work; the impact of education policies and the normativity of their functions; the heterogeneity of the cultural and organizational contexts of schools; the discrepancy between the training required for the practice of

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teaching and the "realities" of schools; continuous training seen as a guarantee of professionalism and responsiveness to legislative changes and pedagogical innovation. However, in the studies of Flores and Madureira, greater relevance is given to the need to rethink the models of initial training of teachers, who cannot be oblivious to the specificity of the contexts where the teaching and learning of students occur, in a permanent articulation between theory and practice.

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